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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7356  
INFO RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1748  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1301  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2145  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 003370

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, DRL/AWH  
NSC FOR E. PHU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: ETHNIC TENSIONS FLARE IN KALIMANTAN

REF: A. JAKARTA 3259

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 2732

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b-d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Tension between the Muslim Malay and Chinese communities has flared in West Kalimantan Province on Borneo Island. Members of the two communities have been pitted against each other in several recent instances. No one has been seriously injured and the GOI has worked to calm the situation. The violence has come against the backdrop of fiercely contested recent elections. The indigenous--and by reputation feared--Dayak community has remained aloof from the situation so far. END SUMMARY.

KALIMANTAN MELTDOWN?

[1](#)2. (SBU) Ethnically mixed West Kalimantan has been the scene of recent turbulence. On December 6, a quarrel between an ethnic Chinese and an ethnic Malay erupted in downtown Pontianak, the provincial capital. According to contacts, news of the incident spread quickly, drawing a group of Malays to the location of the incident. This group damaged some cars and buildings nearby, attacking a Chinese temple and some homes. The police soon appeared and ended the violence. No one was seriously injured. (Note: Roughly 40 percent of the West Kalimantan population is ethnic Malay and 40 percent indigenous Dayak; the Chinese community comprises about 10 percent.)

[1](#)3. (C) Other areas of the province have also seen tensions along ethnic lines. Father William Chang, a Catholic priest and human rights activist in Pontianak who is of Chinese ethnicity, told Pol/C that the local government and community leaders were working hard to calm the situation.

POST-ELECTION BLUES

[1](#)4. (C) Ethnic tensions have apparently spiked in the region due to recent elections. Father Chang told Pol/C the precipitating factor for the riots was the gubernatorial election which took place on November 15. In the election, West Kalimantan elected the candidate from the indigenous Dayak community, Cornelius Kimha, and his running mate--who is ethnic Chinese. They beat the incumbent, a Muslim Malay (see Ref A)--and Malays were not happy with that result.

[1](#)5. (U) Another recent election has also stirred controversy. In Singkawang, a city with a majority Chinese population,

the ethnic Muslim Malay incumbent disputed the result of the November 15 mayoral election in which an ethnic Chinese candidate was named winner. The incumbent filed a court case on November 16 claiming the winning candidate had violated election regulations. There have not been serious problems in Singkawang, but there are reports of some tussles between Chinese and Malays on the streets.

#### DAYAKS OBSERVING

¶6. (C) The Dayak community has not been involved in the tensions. Contacts in West Kalimantan report that the community is "watching and waiting." During Pol/C's recent visit to Pontianak, contacts reported that there was a "tactical" alliance between the Chinese and Dayak communities against the Malay community. Father Chang speculated that some elements of the Malay community were "picking on" the Chinese community because it did not want to take on the Dayak community, which by reputation is quite fierce.

#### HOW TO DISMANTLE AN ATOMIC BOMB

¶7. (C) West Kalimantan has a reputation for violent inter-ethnic clashes. From 1999-2001, for example, members of the Dayak community killed thousands of Muslim Madurese settlers (those Madurese that survived the onslaught fled the province). The Indonesian government and its security forces are keenly aware of the tensions in the area and--based on what we understand--are moving quickly to tamp down on them via community dialogues and increased patrols. That said, the unpredictable element is the Dayak community, which has been known to go after opponents quickly and conclusively. The GOI--taking this to heart--is said to be focusing a lot of its attention on making sure the Dayaks do not get angry.

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